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Senate

The Senate met at 8:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Gracious God, our source of spiritual, intellectual, and physical strength, You have replenished our wells of energy and given us a fresh new day in which we have the privilege of serving You.

Lord, grant the Senators more than the courage of their convictions. Rather, give them convictions that arise from Your gift of courage. May this indomitable courage be rooted in profound times of listening to You that result in a relentless commitment to truth that is expressed in convictions that cannot be compromised.

We trust You to guide them so that all they say and decide is in keeping with Your will. We ask for Your wisdom in the crucial matter to be voted on today. Lord, take command of their minds and their thinking, speak Your truth through their speaking and then give them clarity for hard choices. In the name of our Lord and Savior. Amen

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader, Senator MCCAIN, is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, for the information of all Members, this morning the Senate will begin 1 hour of debate on the veto message to accompany the partial-birth abortion ban legislation. Upon the conclusion of debate time, at approximately 9:30 a.m., the Senate will vote on the question of passing the bill, the objections of the President to the contrary notwithstanding.

standing. Following that vote, the Senate may turn to the consideration of any legislative or executive items cleared for action. The leader would like to remind all Members that there will be no rollcall votes on Monday in observance of the Jewish holiday, Rosh Hashanah. Also, Members should be aware that a rollcall vote has been scheduled for Tuesday, September 22, at 2:20 p.m., on the Kennedy minimum wage amendment.

PARTIAL-BIRTH ABORTION BAN ACT OF 1997—VETO

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GREGG). Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of the veto message on H.R. 1122, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Veto message on H.R. 1122, to amend title 18, to ban partial-birth abortions.

The Senate resumed reconsideration of the bill.

Mr. MCCAIN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I come to the Senate floor today to speak on behalf of millions of defenseless unborn children who cannot speak for themselves. If they could speak, I know that they would ask for a chance to live. Tragically, too many unborn children are not given a choice and they lose their chance at life to abortion.

We are not here today to debate the legality of abortion. We are here to discuss ending partial-birth abortion—a particularly gruesome procedure that would be outlawed today but for the President's veto last year of a national ban.

Banning partial-birth abortions goes far beyond traditional pro-life or pro-choice views. No matter what your personal opinion regarding the legalization of abortion, we should all be appalled and outraged by the practice of

partial-birth abortions. This procedure is inhumane and extremely brutal, entailing the partial delivery of a healthy baby who is then killed by having its vibrant brain stabbed and suctioned out of the skull.

This is simply barbaric.

I have heard from thousands of people in my home State of Arizona who are outraged that this brutal procedure is permitted. Many of them have differing views regarding the legalization of abortion, but they all concur that partial-birth abortions are particularly cruel and must be stopped.

Arizonans were recently reminded about the devastating effects for unborn children of partial-birth abortions. On June 30 of this year, a physician in Phoenix attempted to perform a partial-birth abortion. Dr. John Biskind of the A-Z Women's Center was aborting what he believed was a 23-week-old baby.

After beginning the procedure, Dr. Biskind realized that the child was actually a 37-week, 6-pound baby girl. He immediately stopped the abortion procedure and delivered the baby girl. She suffered a fractured skull and facial lacerations, but thankfully is now recovering with a loving family who adopted her.

This deplorable incident should never have occurred. It could have been prevented, sparing this little girl, now known as Baby Phoenix, the physical and emotional trauma of nearly being killed at birth.

If a national ban on partial-birth abortion had been the law, this Arizona doctor would not have been performing such a horrific procedure on a viable 23-week-old baby—let alone 37-week-old Baby Phoenix.

Clearly, this near-tragedy illustrates the urgent need for a ban on partial-birth abortions in our Nation. We simply cannot allow this heinous procedure to continue taking the lives of viable, healthy babies.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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